

October 13, 2009: English Roundtable Web Chat on "Highly Effective Teachers"

Damon Anderson: Hi everyone! Welcome to our webchat! We will begin in a few minutes. While we are allowing for more people to pop in, please feel free to submit your questions now.

Wang Hongwei 2: Hello!!!

Damon Anderson: Hi Everyone. Welcome to the web chat. We are ready to begin.

Damon Anderson: It has been two months since our last web chat, so thank you for keeping in contact with us and coming back. We would like to know what you think about the time (4pm) for doing this web chat. Is this a better time for you?

Anthony Newman: 4:00 is a good time for me. My classes are in the morning...8:00-12:00

Qi Hongying 2: Hello!

Damon Anderson: Today we would like to talk about "effective teaching."

Susan: Yes, most of us have classes in the morning!

Qi Hongying 2: I think you choose a better time.

Wang Shujuan: be ready

Damon Anderson: Sorry for my typing, I meant "effective teaching."

Wang Hongwei 2: actually this is my first web chat, so i was a little bit worried about the technical things!!

Yan Ling: For me, Monday will be better.

Qi Hongying 2: This topic is what we are interested.

Wang Shujuan: yes

Susan: Yes, what can we do to be effective?

Qi Hongying 2: Because if we find an effective teaching method, we will benefit a lot from it.

Sontaya Noivangklang: For me on weekends

Wang Hongwei 2: 2 mins to go??

Damon Anderson: I think that first we should define what we mean by effective. In many schools they are defining effective by how many students in the class pass a standardized exam. Is that a good criteria?

Wang Hongwei 2: being a effective teacher, we have to get to know what our students needs in the first place!!

Wang Shujuan: teaching real language and understand culture

Qi Hongying 2: I don't thnk so>

hooohoo: hello

Damon Anderson: If student scores on a standardized test is not a good enough measure, then how do you think we should measure effective teaching?

Susan: TO make the best use of the materials we have prepared and help the students to learn as much as we can.

Sontaya Noivangklang: prepare teaching

Damon Anderson 2: In answering a quesitons posted by others, it'll help if you type in Re: plus that person's name. Thanks!

Yan Ling: I don't think it is a good criteria.Teaching activity involves in at least 4 aspects

Damon Anderson 2: In answering a quesitons posted by others, it'll help if you type in Re: plus that person's name. Thanks!

Qi Hongying 2: For effective teaching, I think It means the teacher can bring every student into play and every student can benefit from the class.

hooohoo: I agree with Susan's idea

Damon Anderson 2: 4

Susan: Thank you,hooohoo:)

judy: In my view, the definition should be given based on the different requirement for the course.

lucy: to my mind, Effective teachers strive to motivate and engage all their students in learning rather than simply accepting that some students cannot be engaged and are destined to do poorly.

Yan Ling: first , students-centered

Damon Anderson: Yan Ling, what are the 4 aspects?

Yan Ling: teachers students, teaching materialand teaching methods

Phanisara: I totally agree with Lucy.

lucy: so teachers should know more about the art of teaching, know more about how to arouse students' interests.

Wang Hongwei 2: being effective means that teachers are judged by what much they make their students learned in the time period required

Qi Hongying 2: I agree with Yan Ling

Mao Yongmei: I agree with Yan Ling too

Yan Ling: Thanks

lucy: Effective teachers have high expectations of students. That's what I think student-center means

Sontaya Noivangklang: 4 aspects: smart teacher smart students good curriculum good material

Qi Hongying 2: Quite right! I second with Wang Hongwei.

Wang Hongwei 2: student-centered is not effective way of teaching, in some cases so far as language class is concerned

Phanisara: Knowing the students and can encourage them to learn. If our materials don't fit students need, there won't be any effectiveness in our teaching.

Mao Yongmei: That is an ideal

Yan Ling: Be effective, teachers should know their tasks

Susan: Yes, and how to arouse students' interest? Can you give us some specific examples, Lucy?

Wang Hongwei 2: all the teacher do have high expectation on their students

Fidelia: I also agree with Lucy and Yan Ling about all-inclusive student-centeredness, but how does that meet with the question Damon raises about test results? Do tests always demonstrate this?

Yan Ling: I agree with Phanisara

lucy: let students pose some questions before classes and then teachers may offer reference to them

Susan: Thank you, Lucy. I will try next time:)

Wang Hongwei 2: it requires some tactics to arouse students'

Chen Xiaojun: Effective teaching, in my opinion, should at least hit the two targets: 1. to help students pass certain exams/tests, because this is of direct and immediate importance to the students; 2. to make sure that learners can use language in practice, because this is of practical significance.

Qi Hongying 2: suppose we know the task, how can we teach effectively?

Sontaya Noivangklang: teach them by using their context

Anthony Newman: The test as a 'summative' assessment can be an important tool for us...if we use it as a starting point. However, 'formative' assessment should be used on a regular basis in class.

judy: susan, in my class, i have tried to guide students to do some interactive games such as drama play, debate, and ect.

Wang Hongwei 2: interest!! i 'm not fast at typing!!

lai yihua: I think as a effective teacher should establish a rapport with the students, and help the students dig out his or her potential which they have not clear ideas.

Qi Hongying 2: I don't think helping students to pass certain exams is the goal of effective teaching.

Wang Hongwei 2: i agree with Chen Xiaojun, it is true under China's circumstances!!

Sontaya Noivangklang: using role play

Mao Yongmei: how to find an effective context if we teachers are strictly controlled by the teaching curriculum

Susan: Thank you, Judy. Unfortunately, my class size is 60 students. It's a tough job for me to organize that kind of activities in my class. Anyway, I will try.

Wang Ping: In my view, effective teaching means teaching will have a lasting effect on students, not only help them to reach short term goals such as passing an important exam, getting admitted to a good university, but also helps in cultivating students' appreciation of languages, cultures, peoples, to help them getting ready to become a world citizen.

Yan Ling: Just as saying goes, If you want to help others, you should have the ability first. To be effective, teachers should have a good command of the subject they teach. The teacher can make use of a whole range of teaching skills to make sure learning occurs effectively.

Wang Hongwei 2: to define effective teaching can't be separated from the goals that teaching is trying to achieve!!!

Susan: I totally agree with you. Wang Ping

Chen Xiaojun: I agree with Wang Ping's idea. This is the dual function which I believe in effective teaching of language.

Mao Yongmei: but students have their own different purposes

judy: Qi, different tasks should design different activities and judgement for whether the teaching is effective or not should depend on the course requirement.

Damon Anderson: Let's talk a little more practically. what would you like to be rated on as a teacher? How should you be judged as an effective teacher?

Wang Shujuan: effective teaching is to create surroundings students can understand the usage of language

Damon Anderson: I think that the criteria would be different depending on who is doing the judging and what they are judging for. Would you agree.

Susan: I am trying to do that in my class. However, some of my students ask the teacher to teach some important information about exams, esp.CET4 and 6.

Chen Xiaojun: A good teacher, first of all, is appreciated by the majority of students.

Phanisara: Would also be interesting to ask our students if they view our teaching as being effective for them.

Fidelia: In addition to student performance, peer observation, student feedback.

Qi Hongying 2: I think being effective the teacher should have the ability of conducting some activities in the class and try to arouse students' interest

Wang Hongwei 2: students may have their own different purposes, how can the teaching be effective for all, like the size "one-fits-all"

Yan Ling: make our student learn happily ,and love the subject we teach

lai yihua: try to spur the strong subjective desire among the students to improve the language abilities, which benefits their further development. that will have an ever-lasting effective. that is from my experiences

Wang Hongwei 2: in what way, easier speaking than doing!!

Damon Anderson: We cannot make anyone love something, however, I think that from our sense of enthusiasm and our passion for what we are teaching, that can easily be transmitted to the students.

Phanisara: That's why one-size-fit-all curriculum might not work very well without creativeness of supplementary materials/activities.

judy: to susan, there are more than 50 students in my class too. i divide them into 4-person group and let them participate.

Yan Ling: However,Test is still a good way to check teacher's teaching and students' learning

Yan Ling: It mainly depends on what kind of test is

Susan: I think, as a teacher. We should first of all make the best use of what we have prepared and then according to the needs of different students, we can adjust our primary plan on class.--To be effective.

Damon Anderson: Too many tests only test the knowledge about English, but don't test the skills in using English. Do you agree?

Wang Hongwei 2: you mean we want the students to know we have enthusiasm and our passion for what we are teaching,

Phanisara: I agree with Yan Ling. Both teachers and students can learn from the effective kind of testing conducted in class.

Yan Ling: Not too many ,just twice a seminar

Damon Anderson: Anthony talked about formative vs. summative tests. Most teachers are rated on student performance on summative tests.

wendy: RE Damon: Most tests are about metalanguage and not proficiency. I think that it has a lot to do with how time consuming it is to test for proficiency and also the lack of standards or rubrics for it. It's easier to test metaknowledge.

Chen Xiaojun: As a language teacher, if we succeed in arousing students' interest in and passion for English or other target languages, this is the first triumph we have won.

Yan Ling: who give the tests? It's us--teacher

Damon Anderson: Lucy, you have raised your hand. What would you like to say?

Liu Hong: we can involve the students in practising writing

lai yihua: I have try let them know the significance of English in modern society just like Mandarin in China. Can a person develop himself without having a good command of Mandarin in China,however just speaking his own dialects?

Damon Anderson: Liu Hong, we can involve students in any skill.

Wang Hongwei 2: yes,we do!!so far i think it is the only to measure how effective teachers are in haveing their student to learn!!

Susan: Thank you, Judy. I will try to do that. By the way, do you have the same problem that if we spend more time the activites, we will not have enough time to learn the text? what do you deal with that?

wendy: Yes, but teachers are often forced to give certain kinds of tests and this decreases their effectiveness. This has become a big problem in the US

lucy: i am totally agree with Chen Xiaojun

lucy: sorry, this is first time I am here. Not very familiar with the program.

Qi Hongying 2: The criterion for defining effective teaching is that firstly most of the students like the way their teacher conduct and they are happy to attend the class with their own will; second quite a few studnets get good results from any test given by teh authorities concerned.

claire: so test is the necessary evil here

wendy: REL Susan. Why is it important to learn the text rather than do something communicative with the information from the text? Shouldn't students respond to text instead of learning it?

Damon Anderson: I agree with Wendy. Students should learn how to communicate with and about the information in the text.

Phanisara: Well said. I agree with Chen Xiaojun. If teachers can guide the students to find their own effective ways of learning, they will be the life long learners of the language. English learning then won't stop after they step out of the classrooms.

Wang Hongwei 2: I agree with Qi Hongying

Lucy: teacher's role is very important for the effective teaching .

Yan Ling: So do I

wendy: RE: Damon and Susan. It isn't just about methodology. There are all kinds of texts in the world and nobody would ever be able to learn them all. But to give students skills to approach them all is in my opinion the most effective kind of teaching

Wang Hongwei 2: definitely!!! I think that is technical and tactical side of teaching!!

Wang Ping: Susan, I think well-designed class activities will not take off the time on learning the text, but will motivate students to understand better the texts and help expand their knowledge and practice their skills beyond the text. It'll be good supplement to textbook learning.

Liu Hong: according to the text, we can ask the ss to write about the same topic and see how much they get the knowledge and use what they have learned

Wang Shujuan: teachers's role like conductor, students like actors

claire: to improve communication skills are very important in language learning. if the teacher can foster a good communication environment in class, it will be a good achievement of the teacher.

Liu Hong: thus we can see how much they can understand the topic and whether they can express themselves

Susan: Yes, thank you. Wang Ping. I think the most significant thing for some teachers like me is to how find and organize the "well-designed" activities.

Wang Hongwei 2: it is when teachers's role is like conductor, students like actors that effective teaching can take place

Liu Hong: and the activities should be relevant to the topic and should be interesting

Anthony Newman: If we place a great importance on the 'teacher's role', and 'teacher enthusiasm', what should we do with teachers who are very passionate, creative, and enthusiastic but do not teach any of the content?

Damon Anderson: Susan and Ping, I agree. It is about our classes being organized and having a focus to them. There is a purpose for our activities and tasks and exercises and the students see and understand these purposes as they move towards improvement and gaining more knowledge and skills.

Claire: yes, so that the students can really speak the language and put their knowledge into practice

Yan Ling: Knowing the Ss well and preparing lessons according to meet their needs is my aim

Wang Ping: I also think effective teacher would be willing to share with our peers ways of teaching that we have found effective, or to voice our questions or problems within a "professional community". That way we know we're not alone and it's good to share and to learn from our peers.

Dale Zhang: however, what's an effective actor?

Dale Zhang: sorry, effective conductor

Yan Ling: Knowing the Ss well and preparing lessons according to their intelligence to meet their needs is my aim

Wang Shujuan: teachers organize students to practise what they learned

Wang Hongwei 2: and also teacher's personal charm also accounts for a effective teaching!!

Chen Xiaojun: Different classes usu. requires different teaching methods. In oral English class, we may as well try to involve students in talking, doing role-play, say, just offer them topic, and let them talk.

Yan Ling: agree

Susan: I have tried to divide my students into different groups to prepare for a presentation on a certain point. However, the result turned to be just one or two students' participation.

I also have tried to divid

Damon Anderson: I agree with you, Chen Xiaojun. No two classes are the same.

Dale Zhang: effective teacher should have the lifelong study ability

Lucy: share with others' their teaching experience is really important. Thanks for the chance of chatting here

Wang Hongwei 2: i agree!!

Susan: Yes, we are also students!

Liu Hong: It's the first time for me to chat like this and I'm not quite accustomed to the form

Wang Ping: Dale Zhang, I can't agree more. A good teacher never ceases to improve him/herself.

wendy: Anthony - teachers should have a command of both method and content. It is a disservice to ignore content because there is ultimately an evaluation on that content no matter how engaging the teacher was about other topics.

Qi Hongying 2: Whether the activities are good or not depends on the students. We should change the way according to the students' language level and their requirements though the material is same.

Chen Xiaojun: Re: Susan. Maybe you have to designate students to prepare for the talk. Usually, I will give them assignment ahead of time. Then, when in class, they are ready to participate. It will help the effectiveness.

lucy: so we should never stop improving ourselves

Dale Zhang: giving definition to the effective teacher should include two sides. first, on the student's aspect. second, from the teacher's aspect.

Phanisara: Teaching is both art and science. Being passionate about teaching as well as teaching the content well. Effectiveness can come when we co-teach with other teachers. They can fill in what we don't have.

Damon Anderson: Wendy, there needs to be a distinction, however, between teaching for the test and teaching to the test.

Wang Hongwei 2: I agree with Qi

Liu Hong: the more the teacher knows, the more information the students will get and the more interest they will show in our classes

Liu Hong: the more the teacher knows, the more information the students will get and the more interest they will show in our classes

Susan: Thank you, xiaojun)

Wang Ping: Nina, Wendy and Anthony: You said what I want to say!

wendy: Dale - how do you explain that some students learn no matter how bad the teaching is and that others don't learn no matter how good it is? I propose that good teaching is a defined and observable set of behaviors independent of student performance, though many would disagree. What do you think?

Damon Anderson: Wendy, the answer to your question is quite simple: motivation.

Qi Hongying 2: Quite right! I second.

Dale Zhang: really excellent word, motivation

Yan Ling: to arouse students' motivation, That's what I want to say

Dale Zhang: sometimes students' study motivation will be affected by many factors

wendy: Damon, I still think that too many teachers and too many teacher trainers put too much emphasis on student performance and fail to recognize that good teaching does not always correlate to correct student behavior.

Damon Anderson: You are absolutely right Wendy.

lucy: yeah, motivation is very important. Effective teachers teach in a way that encourages students to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

Wang Ping: Talking about teachers' self-improvement, if you happen to be in Beijing, welcome to visit our office and take advantage of our collection of the resource and materials on ELT, Applied Linguistics and many more.

Dale Zhang: however good teaching can promote students motivation sometimes

Wang Hongwei 2: I agree with Lucy

Qi Hongying 2: I agree with Lucy.

Dale Zhang: Mrs wang, it can't

Fidelia: I think as teachers and teacher trainers we all long for improving our skills, but sometimes there's a lack of opportunity for peer observation and review. Is this the case in China?

Dale Zhang: it's the same

wendy: Dale - I totally agree and I think that harnessing motivation is one of the most effective things that a teacher can do. But I see a lot of bad teaching excused by the fact that students still did OK on the test. It places the locus of control for good teaching outside of the teacher and I think that leads to lack of self reflection and improvement.

Yan Ling: I go to observe my experienced colleagues when I'm puzzled at teaching.

Dale Zhang: however in the middle school, teachers sometimes prepare their lessons together

Liu Hong: we do

Phanisara: I think, we, Asians, need to be more comfortable with co-teaching. We tend to be afraid at "losing face." So we don't encourage peer observation. But ultimately we work harder (with large classes) and less effectively for the students.

Anthony Newman: Fidelia: I worked with my dean on a program that greatly encourages teacher observation. I have at least two teachers in every class. So, I think it can happen.

Anthony Newman: We have great sharing sessions after...this has helped me a lot and I hope has also give the teachers some good ideas.

Chen Xiaojun: Communication among colleagues is important, I think. We need to exchange ideas with each other.

Damon Anderson: Perhaps teachers are uncomfortable with observation because they think it will be something used for administrative purposes. If they can be assured that the observation is for self-development, they might be more willing to participate in such an activity.

Lucy: easier said than done

Anthony Newman: given

Yan Ling: In my university , we are encouraged to observation

Dale Zhang: Wendy- it's true that most time we value students from their scores on their test

Fidelia: What do you all think is the best way for teachers to get good self-reflections and to improve the effectiveness of their own teaching?

Sontaya Noivangklang: my colleagues have no time to observe me

Wendy: When I taught teachers how to observe classes and what to look for, they all told me that they learned more from conducting an observation than from feedback given externally.

Qi Hongying 2: It is not the case in China. Take Jilin University for example, each group leader is required to do the peer observation and give some comment on the teaching. There are two functions of doing so, the first is that the group leader get to know whether the teacher follow the progress; the second is that it is a great chance to find something good in teaching and learn from each other.

Damon Anderson: The time has flown. We are almost at the end of this chat. Do any of you have recommendations for the topic for our next chat in November? Do you like the time?

Dale Zhang: First ,the basic theories study. Second, the peer observation. third, the communication

Qi Hongying 2: I like the time.

Sontaya Noivangklang: yes

Dale Zhang: time is too limited

Dale Zhang: i have class, this time

Anthony Newman: Sontaya: If there is no time for observation, would you feel comfortable asking the students for 'no name' comments?

Fidelia: the time is good. I would nominate "peer observation", it seems like a good offshoot of today's talk.

Liu Hong: the problem is that sometimes it limits the teachers ability when they require the teachers to do the same thing in mutual observation

Wang Ping: Our next webchat will be on Tuesday, November 10th.

Chen Xiaojun: 15:00 P.m will be better for me. But it is O.K. if it is 16:00 Beijing time.

Wang Shujuan: effective conversation

Qi Hongying 2: How time flies. We have to stop here and see you in November 10th.

Yan Ling: I enjoy the ideas of all

Dale Zhang: very good

Liu Hong: nice meeting you all

Dale Zhang: it is not proper way in china ,peer observation

Phanisara: Effective conversation indeed. See you all next month.

Qi Hongying 2: me too!

Damon Anderson: We thank everyone for participating today. We had a very large group today, almost 35 people logged into our chat. Thank you all.

Susan: I have learned a lot from you, thank you:)

Sontaya Noivangklang: good bye

Liu Hong: I'll practise more to follow you.Thank you

Dale Zhang: if you've ideas about effective teacher, please mail me

Wang Hongwei 2: see you!!

Yan Ling: Bye

lucy: thanks

Liu Hong: See you

Dale Zhang: thank all of you

Qi Hongying 2: Byebye

Dale Zhang: bye

Wang Ping: Thank you all for joining us today! I will send out a reminder to you about our topic and time for our next webchat!

Dale Zhang: i am extremely interest in the topic

Damon Anderson: Please tell your friends to join us next month on the 10th. All the best to everyone.

Dale Zhang: thank you, Wang

Susan: Yes, I will. Thank you all.